

## 1. Application details and outcomes

### 1.1. Permit application details

<b>Permit number:</b>	10646/3
<b>Permit type:</b>	Purpose Permit
<b>Applicant name:</b>	Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd
<b>Application received:</b>	30 July 2025
<b>Amendment area:</b>	180 hectares
<b>Purpose of clearing:</b>	Mineral exploration, hydrogeological and geotechnical investigations, and associated activities
<b>Method of clearing:</b>	Mechanical Removal
<b>Tenure:</b>	<i>Iron Ore (Robe River) Agreement Act 1964</i> , Mineral Lease 248SA (ML248SA) General Purpose Leases 47/1235 and 47/1236 Miscellaneous Licences 47/50 and 47/63
<b>Location (LGA area/s):</b>	Shire of Ashburton and Shire of East Pilbara
<b>Colloquial name:</b>	West Angelas Project

### 1.2. Description of clearing activities

Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 180 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 6698 hectares, for the purpose of mineral exploration, hydrogeological and geotechnical investigations, and associated activities (Robe River, 2025).

Clearing permit CPS 10646/1 was granted by the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (now the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration (DMPE)) on 29 November 2024 and was valid from 24 December 2024 to 23 December 2034. The permit authorised the clearing of up to 180 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 6698 hectares, for the purpose of mineral exploration, hydrogeological and geotechnical investigations, and associated activities.

DMPE initiated an amendment to CPS 10646/1 to correct a clerical error within Condition 5(b); to include geotechnical activities as an authorised purpose for clearing (Robe River, 2025). No other amendments are proposed. No clearing has been undertaken under CPS 10646/1 permit to date (Rio Tinto, 2025).

### 1.3. Decision on application and key considerations

<b>Decision:</b>	Grant
<b>Decision date:</b>	6 March 2026
<b>Decision area:</b>	180 hectares of native vegetation

### 1.4. Reasons for decision

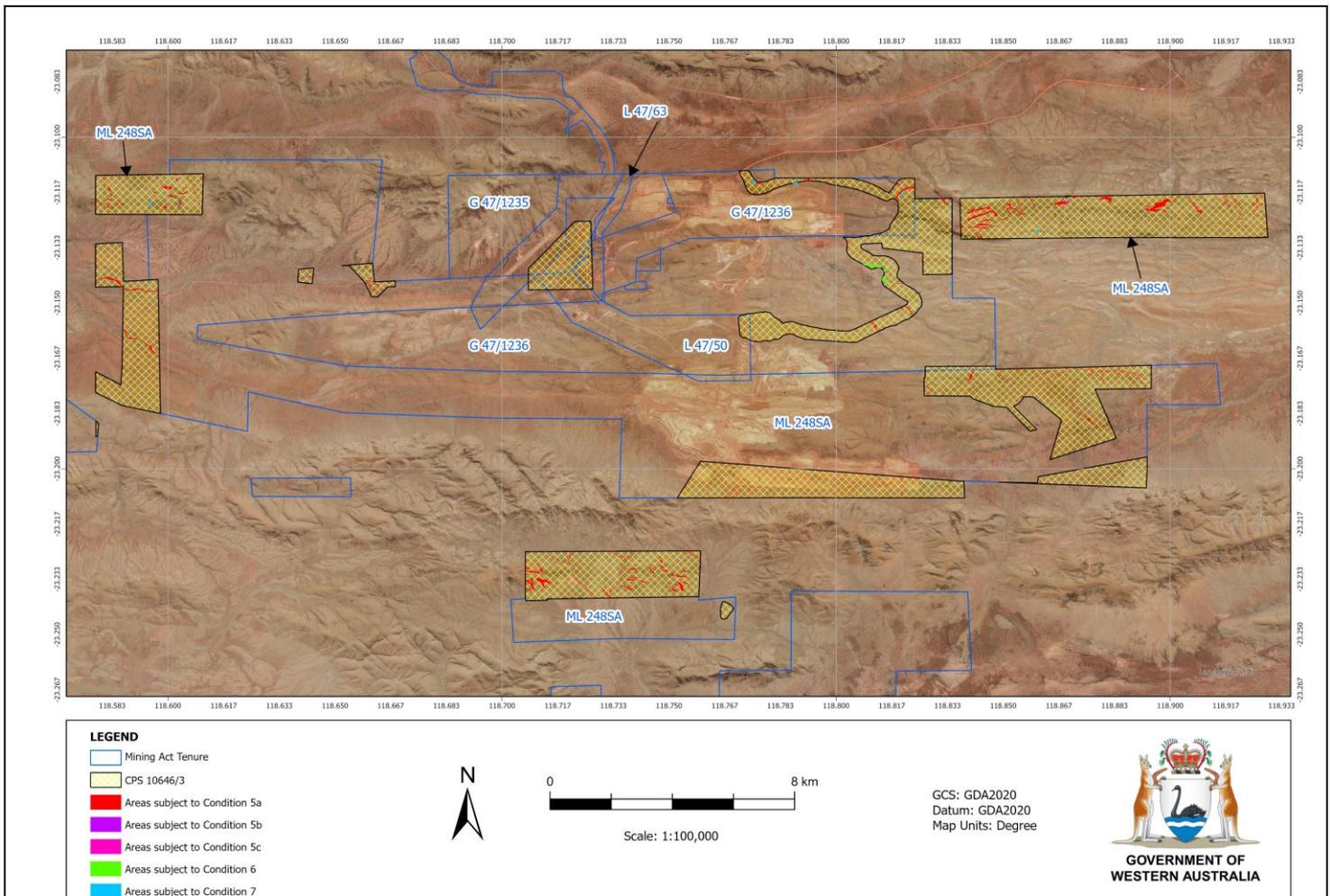
This clearing permit application was initiated, assessed, and determined in accordance with section 51K(1)(e) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act).

In making this decision, the Delegated Officer had regard for the site characteristics, relevant datasets, supporting information provided by the applicant including the results of a flora and vegetation survey and/or fauna survey, the clearing principles set out in Schedule 5 of the EP Act, and any other matters considered relevant to the assessment. The assessment identified that the proposed clearing may have a significant impact on conservation significant flora species, habitat suitable for conservation significant fauna and vegetation growing in association with watercourses.

After consideration of the available information, as well as the applicant's minimisation and mitigation measures, the Delegated Officer determined that the proposed clearing is not likely to lead to an unacceptable risk to the environment and that the potential impacts can be managed by condition on the clearing permit. The Delegated Officer decided to grant a clearing permit with various management conditions.

### 1.5. Site map

A site map of proposed clearing is provided in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1. Map of the amendment area. The areas cross-hatched in yellow indicates the area within which conditional authorised clearing can occur under the granted clearing permit.**

## 2. Detailed assessment of application

### 2.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

While no evidence of avoidance or mitigation measures was provided to support the amendment application, noting the amendment is to correct an administrative error, it was deemed that no further consideration is required to minimise impacts on environmental values. Avoidance and mitigation measures proposed for the original clearing permit (CPS 10646/1) will still be implemented for the amended permit.

### 2.2. Assessment of impacts on environmental values

The amendment being undertaken as part of CPS 10646/3 is administrative in nature. There is no change to previous assessments against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s.51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

### 2.3. Relevant planning instrument and other matters

There are three native title claims (WAD 340/2010, WAD 216/2010 & WAD 78/2005) over the area under application (DPLH, 2026). These claims have been determined by the Federal Court on behalf of the claimant groups (Yinhawangka Part A, Yinhawangka Part B, and Ngarlawangga People). However, the mining tenure has been granted in accordance with the future act regime of the *Native Title Act 1993*, and the nature of the act (i.e. the proposed clearing activity) has been provided for in that process, therefore, the granting of a clearing permit is not a future act under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

There are 16 registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the amendment area (DPLH, 2026). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Aboriginal Sites of Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

The amendment area is located within the EPA assessment for the West Angelas Revised Proposal (Assessment Number: 2290). This proposal is to assess the development of new above and below water table iron ore mine pits and associated infrastructure to sustain existing West Angelas operations. This proposal is not assessing mineral exploration or other activities proposed for this clearing permit.

Other relevant authorisations required for the proposed land use include:

- A Programme of Work approved under the *Mining Act 1978*

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

**End**

## Appendix A. Sources of information

### A.1. GIS datasets

Publicly available GIS datasets used (sourced from [www.data.wa.gov.au](http://www.data.wa.gov.au)):

- Cadastre (Polygon) (LGATE-217)
- DBCA – Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA - Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- Local Government Area (LGA) Boundaries (LGATE-233)
- Native Title (Determination) (LGATE-066)
- Pre-European Vegetation (DPIRD-006)
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Best Available (DPIRD-027)
- WA Now Aerial Imagery

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- Threatened and Priority Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened and Priority Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened and Priority Fauna
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities (Buffers)

### A.2. References

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) (2026) Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. <https://espatial.dplh.wa.gov.au/ACHIS/index.html?viewer=ACHIS> (Accessed 2 February 2026).

Rio Tinto (2025) Native Vegetation Annual Clearing Report - 2024. Prepared by Rio Tinto on behalf of Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd, July 2025.

Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd (2025) Clearing permit application form, CPS 10646/3, received 30 July 2025.

## Glossary

### Acronyms:

<b>BC Act</b>	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> , Western Australia
<b>BoM</b>	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
<b>DAA</b>	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia (now DPLH)
<b>DAFWA</b>	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (now DPIRD)
<b>DCCEEW</b>	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Australian Government
<b>DBCA</b>	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
<b>DEMIRS</b>	Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (now DMPE)
<b>DER</b>	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
<b>DMIRS</b>	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia (now DMPE)
<b>DMP</b>	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DMPE)
<b>DMPE</b>	Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration
<b>DoEE</b>	Department of the Environment and Energy (now DCCEEW)
<b>DoW</b>	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
<b>DPaW</b>	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
<b>DPIRD</b>	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
<b>DPLH</b>	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
<b>DRF</b>	Declared Rare Flora (now known as Threatened Flora)
<b>DWER</b>	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
<b>EP Act</b>	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia

<b>EPBC Act</b>	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Commonwealth Act)
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System
<b>ha</b>	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
<b>IBRA</b>	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
<b>PEC</b>	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
<b>RIWI Act</b>	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
<b>TEC</b>	Threatened Ecological Community

## **Definitions:**

**DBCA (2023) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia:**

### **Threatened species**

**T** Listed by order of the Minister as Threatened in the category of critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable under section 19(1), or is a rediscovered species to be regarded as threatened species under section 26(2) of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act).

**Threatened fauna** is the species of fauna that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable threatened species.

**Threatened flora** is the species of flora that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable threatened species.

The assessment of the conservation status of threatened species is in accordance with the BC Act listing criteria and the requirements of [Ministerial Guideline Number 1](#) and [Ministerial Guideline Number 2](#) that adopts the use of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [Red List of Threatened Species Categories and Criteria](#), and is based on the national distribution of the species.

### **CR Critically endangered species**

Threatened species considered to be “*facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as critically endangered under section 19(1)(a) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 20 and the ministerial guidelines.

### **EN Endangered species**

Threatened species considered to be “*facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as endangered under section 19(1)(b) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 21 and the ministerial guidelines.

### **VU Vulnerable species**

Threatened species considered to be “*facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as vulnerable under section 19(1)(c) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 22 and the ministerial guidelines.

### **Extinct species**

Listed by order of the Minister as extinct under section 23(1) of the BC Act as extinct or extinct in the wild.

### **EX Extinct species**

Species where “*there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 24 of the BC Act).

### **EW Extinct in the wild species**

Species that “*is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; and it has not been recorded in its known habitat or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 25 of the BC Act).

Currently there are no threatened fauna or threatened flora species listed as extinct in the wild.

### **Specially protected species**

### **SP Specially protected species**

Listed by order of the Minister as specially protected under section 13(1) of the BC Act. Meeting one or more of the following categories: species of special conservation interest; migratory species; cetaceans; species subject to international agreement; or species otherwise in need of special protection.

Species that are listed as threatened species (critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable) or extinct species under the BC Act cannot also be listed as specially protected species.

**MI Migratory species**

Fauna that periodically or occasionally visit Australia or an external Territory or the exclusive economic zone; or the species is subject of an international agreement that relates to the protection of migratory species and that binds the Commonwealth; and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 15 of the BC Act).

Migratory species include birds that are subject to an agreement between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) or The Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), and fauna subject to the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (Bonn Convention), an environmental treaty under the United Nations Environment Program. Migratory species listed under the BC Act are a subset of the migratory animals, that are known to visit Western Australia, protected under the international agreements or treaties, excluding species that are listed as Threatened species.

**CD Species of special conservation interest (conservation dependent fauna)**

Species of special conservation need that are dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 14 of the BC Act).

Currently only fauna are listed as species of special conservation interest.

**OS Other specially protected species**

Species otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 18 of the BC Act).

Currently only fauna are listed as species otherwise in need of special protection.

**Priority species**

**P Priority species**

Priority is not a listing category under the BC Act. The Priority Flora and Fauna lists are maintained by the department and are published on the department's website.

All fauna and flora are protected in WA following the provisions in Part 10 of the BC Act. The protection applies even when a species is not listed as threatened or specially protected, and regardless of land tenure (State managed land (Crown land), private land, or Commonwealth land).

Species that may possibly be threatened species that do not meet the criteria for listing under the BC Act because of insufficient survey or are otherwise data deficient, are added to the Priority Fauna or Priority Flora Lists under Priorities 1, 2 or 3. These three categories are ranked in order of prioritisation for survey and evaluation of conservation status so that consideration can be given to potential listing as threatened.

Species that are adequately known, meet criteria for near threatened, or are rare but not threatened, or that have been recently removed from the threatened species list or conservation dependent or other specially protected fauna lists for other than taxonomic reasons, are placed in Priority 4. These species require regular monitoring.

Assessment of priority status is based on the Western Australian distribution of the species, unless the distribution in WA is part of a contiguous population extending into adjacent States, as defined by the known spread of locations.

**P1 Priority One - Poorly-known species – known from few locations, none on conservation lands**

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less) which are potentially at risk. All occurrences are either: very small; or on lands not managed for conservation, for example, agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, road and rail reserves, gravel reserves and active mineral leases; or otherwise under threat of habitat destruction or degradation.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements for threatened listing and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. These species are in urgent need of further survey.

**P2 Priority Two - Poorly-known species – known from few locations, some on conservation lands**

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less), some of which are on lands managed primarily for nature conservation, for example, national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and other lands with secure tenure being managed for conservation.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements for threatened listing and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. These species are in urgent need of further survey.

**P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species – known from several locations**

Species that are known from several locations and the species does not appear to be under imminent threat or from few but widespread locations with either large population size or significant remaining areas of apparently suitable habitat, much of it not under imminent threat.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from several locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them. These species need further survey.

**P4 Priority Four - Rare, Near Threatened and other species in need of monitoring**

- (a) Rare. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and that are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection but could be if present circumstances change. These species are usually represented on conservation lands.
- (b) Near Threatened. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed and that are close to qualifying for vulnerable but are not listed as a conservation dependent specially protected species.
- (c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species or lists of conservation dependent or other specially protected species, during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.
- (d) Other species in need of monitoring.

**Principles for clearing native vegetation:**

- (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.
- (b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora.
- (d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a threatened ecological community.
- (e) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.
- (f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.
- (g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.
- (h) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.
- (i) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.
- (j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.